Claims 1-5 are cancelled

6. (previously presented) A coin discriminating device, comprising:

a sensor electrode;

an oscillator coupled to the sensor electrode, the oscillator being capable of generating an output signal with a frequency which is capacitively controllable;

a frequency detector adapted to receive the output signal from the oscillator as well as a reference signal from a reference oscillator so as to provide an output which comprises a difference between aforesaid signals for detecting a frequency deviation in said oscillator output signal, caused by a variation in capacitance at said sensor electrode when a coin is positioned in a vicinity of the sensor electrode; and

a processing device adapted to determine a thickness of said coin from the frequency deviation, wherein the coin discriminating device is arranged such that said variation in capacitance occurs in a gap between the sensor electrode and a surface of the coin, wherein the size of the gap depends on the thickness of the coin.

7. (previously presented) The coin discriminating device according to claim 6, wherein the oscillator comprises a voltage-controlled oscillator.

8. (currently amended) A method of determining a thickness of a coin by detecting and evaluating a variation in capacitance, comprising the steps of:

detecting the variation in capacitance between a sensor electrode and a surface of the coin,

wherein said variation in capacitance occurs in a gap between ~~a~~ the sensor electrode and the surface of the coin, and

wherein the size of the gap depends on the thickness of the coin.

9. (previously presented) The method according to claim 8, further comprising the steps of:

generating a first signal having a frequency which depends on said variation in capacitance;

generating a second signal having a fixed reference frequency;

producing a value representing a difference in frequency between the first and second signals; and

from said difference in frequency, determining the thickness of the coin.

10. (previously presented) A coin handling machine, comprising:

a coin inlet;

a coin feeder;

a coin discriminator;

a handling device, wherein the coin discriminator is coupled to the handling device and is adapted to determine a type, identity or denomination of respective coins received from the coin feeder;

wherein the coin discriminator comprises:

a sensor device capable of measuring a variation in capacitance between a sensor electrode and a surface of an individual coin, wherein said variation in capacitance occurs

in a gap between the sensor electrode and a surface of the coin, said size of the gap depending on the thickness of the coin;

a signal generating device capable of producing a signal representing said variation in capacitance; and

a processing device capable of determining a thickness of the coin from said signal.